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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on
Monday, 13 May 1991, at 11.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria)

- Report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session

- Other business

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The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.

REPORT OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now take up agenda item 8, regarding the consideration and adoption of the reports of subsidiary bodies on various agenda items and the draft report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, as contained in documents A/CN.10/1991/CRP.2 to 6.

In accordance with the agreed programme of work we shall begin our concluding statements after we have adopted the Commission's report as a whole.

I should like now to start the process of the consideration and adoption of the reports of subsidiary bodies on individual agenda items. I shall call upon the Chairman of each Working Group in turn to introduce the report of that Group.

We shall begin with the report of Working Group I on agenda item 4, "Objective information on military matters", as contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.3, and I call upon the Chairman of that Group, Ambassador Andre Erdos of Hungary, to introduce the report of Working Group I.

Mr. ERDÖS (Hungary), Chairman of Working Group I: On two occasions I have had the honour of informing the Commission about the progress of work in Working Group I dealing with objective information on military matters. Details of the Group's activities are therefore known to all delegations and are also recorded in the report (A/CN.10/1991/CRP.3), which I now have the pleasure to present.

The report on agenda item 4, entitled "Objective information on military matters", is the result of intensive debate not only this year but last year as well. It is only fair to pay a tribute to the rich legacy the Working

(Mr. Erdös, Chairman, Working Group I)

Group inherited from its predecessor. The consultation group, under your guidance, Mr. Chairman, provided a solid basis on which we were able to continue our discussion on the subject-matter this year.

The results outlined in the report also reflect the readiness manifested by delegations to channel efforts towards the goal of conducting in-depth deliberations on the specific issue assigned to the Working Group with a view to arriving at a set of guidelines, including some concrete recommendations.

The descriptive paragraphs of the report are self-explanatory, and so, I believe, are the other paragraphs. For the sake of clarity, however, I wish to provide some insight into the main considerations and preoccupations that characterized both the debate and the decision adopted in the Working Group.

At the beginning there was agreement among delegations on the need further to consolidate the existing trend towards greater openness and transparency in military matters. At the same time there was also agreement that objective information on military matters is not, cannot be and is not meant to be an end in itself, but rather, as a confidence-building measure, it is designed to promote disarmament and thus contribute to greater security and peace.

With that understanding in mind, the Group was able to achieve the results expected of it under the present favourable conditions both in international relations and in the framework of the recently reformed mechanism of the Disarmament Commission. The result is recorded in the report and in the text suggested by the Chairman of the Group, which has been annexed to the report by the unanimous decision of the Group.

(Mr. Erdös, Chairman, Working Group I)

That latter document - the Chairman's suggested text - enjoys a specific status in the United Nations hierarchy of documentation, but I believe there is a general feeling that this special form for recording work and achievement is to occupy in future a more prominent role in the Commission.

(Mr. Erdös, Chairman
Working Group I)

The Chairman's text is not a negotiated text of the future document that the Working Group is required to produce in 1992. It is done by the Chairman, under well-known circumstances, to register and safeguard the main elements and ideas of the discussion, and thereby to provide a point of departure, a starting basis for further work and efforts next year. The Chairman's text is produced to reflect, as faithfully as possible, what in the Chairman's considered view constitutes the mainstream opinion in the Group.

Consequently, the text cannot reflect all views and ideas; nor does it imply agreement or commit any delegation to any particular idea or formulation. The Chairman's text, it goes without saying, is not the text that any delegation, including his own, is prepared to accept today. It is a text that not a single delegation should feel either uncomfortable about or entirely happy with. This, in my humble view, is the sign of good compromises, also indicating the presence of a fair chance of a future consensus. That consensus, however, will still demand major efforts from all delegations. It will require mutual accommodation and determined departure from long-established but more and more antiquated schemas and patterns.

It was with all that in mind that the Chairman of the Group prepared his suggested text on guidelines for objective information on military matters, and that the Working Group decided to annex it to its report.

Before concluding this presentation, I wish to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to all delegations for the spirit of good will and cooperation exhibited throughout the meetings and consultations. On behalf of the Group as a whole, I wish to place on record our deep appreciation to the Secretary of the Working Group, Mr. Timur Alasaniya, for his most valuable support, which also contributed to the good spirits and atmosphere we all experienced while dealing with agenda item 4.

The CHAIRMAN: The Commission is now prepared to adopt the report. If there is no comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group I on item 4 regarding objective information on military matters, as contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.3.

The report was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Egypt, the Chairman of Working Group II on agenda item 5, "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons", to introduce the report of that Working Group, as contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.4.

Mr. MOUSSA (Egypt), Chairman of Working Group II: It is my privilege, on behalf of Working Group II, to introduce the report of the Group on its consideration of agenda item 5. The report is contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.4.

In carrying out its deliberations, the Working Group had before it the list of documents listed in paragraph 2 of the report. The Working Group held 11 meetings.

In this, the first of three years during which the item is to remain on the agenda of the Commission, the Chairman took a more general rather than specific approach to the deliberations. This approach, it was felt, would allow for a preliminary free exchange of views from which the Group could arrive at defining the elements and aspects which members considered of importance and worthy of further in-depth consideration. During the course of the discussions, a number of elements were identified by the Chairman as aspects that were more frequently raised and deliberated by the members of the Group and around which different points of view were exchanged. Those

(Mr. Moussa, Chairman,
Working Group II)

elements are included in the Chairman's Paper, which is annexed to the report of the Group.

The deliberations of the Working Group on this item are general and, around the elements identified by the Chairman, have shown once again the extent of the divergence of points of view, in terms of both substance and perception concerning the means to achieve progress on this issue. Reaching consensus on this item still seems to be difficult and many gaps have yet to be breached. In this context, it would be appropriate for me to emphasize once again that if the Commission is to achieve substantial progress in the field of nuclear disarmament, it is vital that the political will necessary to reach tangible results in this field be shared equally by all States striving to consolidate the progress witnessed in international relations.

The time seems ripe, and more so than ever before, for abandoning the tendencies that have so far continued to prevail in focusing on narrow national or regional security concerns instead of taking the initiative in an effort to formulate new and imaginative approaches to the issue that may widen the scope of dialogue concerning nuclear disarmament, thereby raising the possibility of reaching, through the exchange of views which the Commission so amply provides, the consensus required to set the international community on the path towards peace and prosperity. The nuclear dimension remains a priority in relation to international peace and security, and I would say in relation to regional peace and security as well. There is no room for addressing this issue with apathy in view of the consequences that may arise from the threat that nuclear weapons pose. It is my sincere hope that the outcome of the next session of the Disarmament Commission will unequivocally confirm our common commitment to the objective of nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Moussa, Chairman,
Working Group II)

However, I believe that this year's session has helped to identify some aspects on which members of the Group seem interested to deliberate further, and that the Working Group might find it useful to take this process a step further by focusing its work on specific elements that coincide with priorities of the members and on which concrete progress could be achieved over the next two years. It goes without saying that this should be in consonance with the basic agreement or consensus already reached in so far as priorities are concerned.

Upon further reflection on the proceedings of this session of the Disarmament Commission, I might draw attention to the possible need, during the organizational session of the Commission, to give further consideration to the matter of the schedule of the Working Groups and to take into account the restrictions that this year's meetings placed on delegations in participating actively in the meetings of Working Groups. I propose in this context that the Disarmament Commission hold a meeting to assess and evaluate its performance during this first session after the implementation of its reform programme.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to all delegations for their efforts and support both in informal consultations and in formal meetings on this difficult issue. I wish also to express my gratitude to the Secretary of the Working Group, Ms. Jenifer Mackby, for her most valuable assistance, and to the Secretariat staff which efficiently serviced our meetings.

The CHAIRMAN: If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group II on item 5 regarding nuclear disarmament, as contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.4.

The report was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Now I should like to take up the report of Working Group III on agenda item 6, entitled "Regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security", as contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.5. I call on the Chairman of the Group, Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti, representative of Indonesia, to introduce that report.

Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia), Chairman of Working Group III: I feel privileged to introduce the report of Working Group III on agenda item 6, and to give a brief account of the Group's deliberations.

The Disarmament Commission at its 151st meeting, on 4 December 1990, decided to establish Working Group III to deal with agenda item 6, entitled "Regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security". In discharging its mandate Working Group III held 11 meetings and two open-ended informal consultations.

At the first meeting of the Working Group, held on 24 April 1991, I submitted the Chairman's non-paper containing a structure for the general exchange of views on agenda item 6, which I had prepared in consultation with interested delegations. The general exchange of views was held at the second and third meetings of the Working Group, on 25 and 26 April respectively. Following the general exchange of views, I submitted to the 4th meeting of the Working Group, held on 29 April, the Chairman's informal working paper (A/CN.10/1991/WG.III/CRP.1), containing a possible structure for an in-depth discussion of agenda item 6. The document was further discussed at the

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Chairman, Working Group III)

5th meeting of the Working Group. Following the discussion on that document I submitted to the Working Group on 1 May the Chairman's working paper (A/CN.10/1991/WG.III/CRP.2) containing a structure for an in-depth discussion of agenda item 6, and a time-table (A/CN.10/1991/WG.III/CRP.3).

Working Group III held in-depth discussions on agenda item 6 from 2 May to 7 May, during which various views were expressed and proposals were made by delegations on five specific topics under agenda item 6. These were: the relationship between regional disarmament and global security and arms limitation and disarmament; principles and guidelines; ways and means; machineries and modalities; and the role of the United Nations.

During the deliberations on agenda item 6, seven working papers were submitted to the Working Group - by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Austria, China, Ecuador, the Netherlands, on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community, Pakistan and Australia.

From the general exchange of views on agenda item 6 and the in-depth discussions on the five topics I mentioned earlier, as well as from the contributions in the form of working papers submitted by delegations, it is evident that the agenda item aroused a considerable degree of interest. It was generally felt that the inclusion of the item on the Commission's agenda is not only pertinent, but also timely.

I am pleased to report to the Commission that in this session Working Group III has made important progress in discharging its mandate. In the course of deliberations, specific elements of the subject under consideration have been identified and examined, experience gained in different regions has been exchanged and possible areas of common ground have been explored. It is

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Chairman, Working Group III)

gratifying to note that a convergence of views on many of the elements of the subject under consideration emerged during the course of deliberations on agenda item 6. However, certain other elements seem to require more intensive discussions in order to harmonize various views on those issues.

At the next session of the Commission, in 1992, further in-depth discussions on the five topics under the agenda item that I referred to earlier would certainly lead to more progress towards reaching common ground on the elements of each topic. In order to facilitate further in-depth discussions on the five topics at next year's session of the Disarmament Commission, following two open-ended informal consultations on each of the topics under consideration I presented to the Working Group at its eleventh meeting the Chairman's paper (A/CN.10/1991/WG.III/CRP.5) containing my own assessment of the main trends of the deliberations on agenda item 6 in the Working Group, including a compilation of general elements on each of the topics under consideration which emerged during the course of its deliberations. This document was prepared by the Chairman of the Working Group on the understanding that it did not bind any delegation and that it would be considered further at the 1992 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

The report of Working Group III on agenda item 6, including its annex containing the Chairman's paper I have just referred to (A/CN.10/1991/WG.III/CRP.5), is now before the Commission for its consideration.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, allow me to express my sincere appreciation to all delegations participating in the deliberations in Working Group III.

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Chairman, Working Group III)

Without their contributions and cooperation, important progress in the Working Group would not have been possible. I should like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to you, Sir, for your effective guidance and leadership. And on behalf of Working Group III I should also like to thank its Secretary, Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung, and his deputy, Ms. Florence Lee, for their valuable assistance to the Working Group and to its Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group III on item 6 regarding regional disarmament, as contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.5.

The report was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like now to take up the report of Working Group IV on item 7, entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields", as contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.6. I call on the Chairman of the Group, Ambassador Luiz de Araujo Castro, representative of Brazil, to introduce the report of Working Group IV.

Mr. ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil), Chairman of Working Group IV: On behalf of Working Group IV, I have the pleasure of presenting the report of the Working Group on agenda item 7, entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields".

The report, contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.6, was adopted by consensus at the last meeting of Working Group IV, held last Friday, 10 May 1991. In my opinion, it reflects in an objective and appropriate manner the work accomplished by the Group during the past few weeks.

(Mr. Araujo Castro, Chairman, Working Group IV)

As stated in the report, the discussions held in the Working Group were considered to be quite useful. They revealed awareness of the basic difficulties of the complex and wide-ranging mandate entrusted to the Group on an item that covers matters that had never before been dealt with in a systematic debate in the United Nations.

The Working Group decided to structure its work around four substantive aspects of agenda item 7: scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security; science and technology for disarmament; the role of science and technology in other related fields; and the transfer of high technology with military applications.

The report identifies the issues discussed under each sub-item and attempts to describe the debates as objectively as possible. It does so subject to the limitations, but with the merits, of agreed language.

(Mr. Araujo Castro, Chairman, Working Group IV)

The discussions in the Working Group gave delegations the opportunity to express their opinions and make specific suggestions and proposals on the substantive issues involved. Differences of perspective and new ideas and insights were presented in a constructive and cooperative manner. The debate also permitted a preliminary exchange of views on how attention might be focused in the consideration of this item at the next two sessions of the Disarmament Commission, and on which specific questions.

In the course of the work of the Group a total of seven working papers were presented, by Argentina and Brazil, India, China, the Netherlands on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community, Colombia, Austria and Canada. I believe those working papers represent a very useful contribution to the work of the Commission in dealing with this new agenda item.

The report now before the Commission, the working papers that were presented and the preliminary but very thoughtful discussions we held on different aspects of agenda item 7 will be, I am sure, of value in guiding the Disarmament Commission in its future work on the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields.

I wish to express to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other members of the Bureau of the Disarmament Commission my recognition for your always helpful guidance. Acknowledgement is due also to the members of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, in particularly Mr. Sammy Kum Buo and Mr. Jack Gerardi-Siebert, and of other areas of the United Nations Secretariat who assisted the Group in its work.

(Mr. Araujo Castro, Chairman, Working Group IV)

To all who participated directly in the work of Working Group IV, I convey a special word of thanks for their support. This is their report, and I believe they deserve to be congratulated on it.

The CHAIRMAN: As there are no comments on the report of Working Group IV (A/CN.10/1991/CRP.6), I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt that report.

The report was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Now that we have adopted all the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, I should like to thank the Chairmen of the Working Groups for their endeavours in dealing with their subjects and for their cooperation in carrying out the tasks entrusted to the Commission by the General Assembly.

We are now in a position to take up the draft report of the Disarmament Commission, as contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.2.

I have the pleasure of inviting the Rapporteur of the Commission, Mr. Bahman Naimi-Arfa of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to introduce the draft report.

Mr. NAIMI-ARFA (Islamic Republic of Iran), Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission: It is my honour and pleasure to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the Commission's draft report on its current session, as contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.2, copies of which have been distributed to the members of the Commission.

In conformity with previous practice the draft report contains four chapters: Introduction, Organization and work of the 1991 session, Documentation, and Conclusions and recommendations.

(Mr. Naimi-Arfa, Rapporteur, Disarmament Commission)

The document presents a factual description of the Commission's work during this session. With regard to the substantive work done by the Commission's subsidiary bodies, the relevant sections will contain the reports of the four Working Groups, which have just been adopted by the Commission.

As members may note, certain information has been left blank at this stage. I propose that we leave it to the Secretariat to complete the text with meeting numbers and dates as appropriate.

My introduction of the draft report would not be complete if I did not express my gratitude to those who have made contributions to the document. I should like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Secretariat for the assistance and cooperation they provided to me in the preparation of the draft report of the Commission. In particular I should like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and his senior staff. In addition I wish to offer sincere thanks to Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung, the Secretary of the Commission, and his colleagues for their valuable assistance and cooperation.

Before concluding these brief remarks, Mr. Chairman, let me emphasize that it was a great honour and privilege for me to serve under your distinguished leadership and to receive the fullest cooperation of the Chairmen of the four Working Groups, who so ably guided the deliberations of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission during this crucial period which marks a new departure in the context of improving the functioning of the Disarmament Commission.

With this brief introduction, I now recommend that the Commission adopt the draft report.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now consider the draft report of the Commission paragraph by paragraph. We shall begin with part I, "Introduction". If there are no comments, may I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt paragraph 1?

Paragraph 1 was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments on paragraph 2?

Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States of America): My suggestion is strictly editorial in nature, and I am not going to insist on it if there is any problem. I suggest that the first sentence read as follows:

"The Disarmament Commission met at United Nations Headquarters and held four meetings, on 4, 19 and 28 December 1990 and 29 January 1991, for a brief organizational session (A/CN.10/PV.151-154)".

The CHAIRMAN: The Secretariat will take note of and carry out that editorial change. Does the Commission wish to adopt paragraph 2 as amended?

Paragraph 2, as amended, was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We turn now to part II, "Organization and work of the 1991 session". As there are no comments on paragraphs 3 to 11, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 3 to 11 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any comments on paragraph 12?

Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States of America): There is language in paragraph 12 that used to appear in the Disarmament Commission's reports in previous years. It may have been appropriate then, but in looking at the reports of the Working Groups, and also as is evident from statements we have just heard from the Chairmen of those various Groups, it seems to me that the phrase "and the conclusions and recommendations contained therein" does not actually reflect the situation. I do not think any of the Working Groups - perhaps unfortunately, but that is the fact - has reached any conclusions or recommendations at this stage. I would therefore suggest that the sentence simply read:

"The reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission are included in section IV of the present report."

The CHAIRMAN: Is the Commission prepared to adopt paragraph 12 with the deletion of the words "and the conclusions and recommendations contained therein"?

Paragraph 12, as orally amended, was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the Commission prepared to adopt paragraph 13?

Paragraph 13 was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We move on to part III of the draft report, "Documentation". Does the Commission agree to adopt paragraph 14?

Paragraph 14 was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Subheading B is entitled "Other documents, including documents submitted by Member States". Does the Commission agree to adopt paragraphs 15 to 36 inclusive?

Paragraphs 15 to 36 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We come now to part IV, "Conclusions and Recommendations". Does the Commission agree to adopt paragraph 37?

Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States of America): I think that paragraph 37 requires a change consequential to the one we just adopted in paragraph 12. The words "and the conclusions and recommendations contained therein" should be deleted.

Mr. STEFANINI (France) (interpretation from French): In connection with what the representative of the United States has just said, we wonder whether the title of part IV should not be changed to "Report of subsidiary bodies", rather than "Conclusions and recommendations". If the title is changed, of course, the change will have to reflected in the table of contents.

The CHAIRMAN: If the Commission agrees with the two proposals just made by the representatives of the United States of America and France, the Secretariat will make the appropriate changes.

Does the Commission agree to the adoption of paragraph 37, as orally amended?

Paragraph 37, as orally amended, was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Commission agree to adopt paragraph 38?

Paragraph 38 was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Commission agree to adopt paragraph 39?

Paragraph 39 was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Commission agree to adopt paragraph 40?

Paragraph 40 was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Commission agree to adopt paragraph 41?

Paragraph 41 was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Commission agree to adopt paragraph 42?

Paragraph 42 was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Now that all paragraphs of the draft report have been adopted, I would like to take up the draft report of the Commission as a whole, with all reports of the subsidiary bodies inserted therein. May I take it that it is the wish of the Commission to adopt the draft report of the Commission as a whole, as contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.2?

The draft report, as orally amended, was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: The Commission has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 8.

OTHER BUSINESS

The CHAIRMAN: It appears that no delegation wishes to make a statement under agenda item 9, "Other business". May I take it, therefore, that the Commission has concluded its consideration of that item?

It was so decided.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

The CHAIRMAN: We are now approaching the final stage of the Commission's work, namely, concluding statement by delegations to assess the work of the Commission during the substantive session. We still have quite a lot of time, and I would ask for the Commission's agreement that we use this time for concluding statements. In that connection I would also ask for the cooperation of delegations whose names have been inscribed on the list of speakers, and if they are prepared to do so I would invite them now to make their statements, thereby permitting us to save the whole afternoon for other important business outside the Commission.

Mr. FRASER (Canada): My delegation agrees with the Chairman's intent to proceed in the manner just described. However, the head of my delegation is currently negotiating her text with our capital. She expects to

(Mr. Fraser, Canada)

be here soon. We have asked to speak last, and we hope that we can get this done. However, although we had originally planned to speak in the afternoon, I am confident that we will be able to accede to the Chairman's wishes.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair is sensitive to the position of the delegation of Canada, and perhaps we might therefore begin with delegations that are prepared to speak and then see how far we get.

Mr. MORRIS (Australia): Let me at the outset congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the Chairmen of the Working Groups, on the excellent manner in which you have conducted this year's work in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. You have provided inspiring leadership to us all, and we have been singularly fortunate in the high calibre of the other officers of the Commission. It goes without saying that in evaluating this session and its achievements, which are considerable, the extent to which we may express specific areas of concern in no way reflects upon you or other officers of the Commission.

As we all know, the Disarmament Commission is a deliberative body, the function of which is simply to consider and make recommendations on various proposals in the field of disarmament. It is further agreed that, in so far as is possible, every effort shall be made in the Commission to adopt by consensus substantive decisions or recommendations. This injunction to seek consensus sometimes puts us in difficult positions because of the widely varying views of countries on a number of the priority disarmament issues. We accept, however, because logic and common sense dictate, that in a deliberative body such as the Disarmament Commission recommendations which do not enjoy consensus will be of little value, since there will be no universal willingness to implement them.

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

It is in this particular respect that the Disarmament Commission differs from the First Committee, for example, where it is quite natural, if consensus cannot be reached, for votes on draft resolutions, all of which usually contain recommendations, to be taken. I am focusing on the declaratory nature of the First Committee versus the deliberative nature of the Commission, because this difference is very important. If it did not exist, there would be no reason to duplicate the work of the First Committee in the United Nations system.

Another equally important point is that, if the Commission is qualitatively different from the First Committee - in that its single goal is consensus recommendations - then we should work in it in a manner which is oriented towards effectively fulfilling that objective.

A few years ago, a number of member States, including my own, identified the need to reform the Commission in order to bring it back on the path of fulfilling that objective. We hoped, but did not really expect, that a reform package as well considered and goal-oriented would be achieved. We were therefore pleased when, last year, in accordance with that reform package, we cleared all old items off the agenda - generally with consensus recommendations - in order to start this year with a new, streamlined agenda of four items. Each item has been given a three-year maximum "shelf life" during which time our mandated task is to seek consensus recommendations. If they cannot be achieved, we pocket the experience and go to other areas where we may be more likely to succeed.

I have entered into this somewhat didactic introduction in order to put the following specific comments on the four agenda items into their correct perspective and to highlight our need further to focus the role and nature of the Disarmament Commission if it is to succeed in its endeavours.

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

Australia sees itself as an active, constructive and serious supporter of the multilateral disarmament process. We would like to see the Commission fulfil its mandated task and, while we recognize the achievements that were made in the various working groups, we can only wonder whether more could have been possible this year - notwithstanding our tight time-frame - or whether some representatives in fact have forgotten what our mandated task is, and are seeing the Commission as an extension of the general debate of the General Assembly. In raising this question, I would emphasize that the difficulties encountered in each working group were generally caused by a small group of delegations, and essentially the same delegations. In no way am I suggesting that national positions can be forcefully altered or that divergencies should not be expressed and respected in the Commission. That goes without saying. I am concerned, however, that in some cases the Commission failed to reach agreement on even the most simple of questions, such as the future work of a working group, or would allow itself to record faithfully areas where it seemed to accept that agreement actually existed.

I will now turn to the specific items and comments in the aforementioned context on each. First, I will take up Working Group I, which covered objective information on military matters. As the only agenda item in its second year, and consequently focusing the need to reach a conclusion next year, it was pleasing to see some progress made in the deliberations, but disappointing to note that there is still not a firmer basis on which to proceed next year.

We were encouraged by the way in which the Chairman of the Working Group moved the group quickly from general discussion to focus discussion on objectives, principles, scope and machinery. The working papers provided by a number of delegations gave a useful basis for consideration of these issues.

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

Many of the points contained in the working papers are well reflected in the Chairman's paper, which will serve as the point of departure for consideration of this item next year. I should add that, although my delegation strongly supports the Chairman's paper, there are, naturally enough, parts of it with which we would not be able to agree.

Australia is committed to the goal of nations providing as much objective information as possible as a confidence-building measure and in the context of negotiations, too. We sincerely hope that before the Commission meets next year, members will consider carefully the issues discussed this year, as represented in the Chairman's paper, and will be prepared to bring this item to a successful conclusion. We recognize that there are still some significant differences of approach, particularly on issues such as equal responsibility, undiminished security, and scope. Some of these differences are magnified by misunderstandings as to exactly what is envisaged. It is to be hoped that more detailed discussions will help to overcome this problem. We also note that the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts to Carry Out a Study on Ways and Means of Promoting Transparency in International Transfers of Conventional Arms will provide its report to the General Assembly at this year's session. We look forward to participating in discussion of this report and to further considering its recommendations at the 1992 session of the Commission.

I turn now to Working Group II, on nuclear disarmament. The Group on nuclear disarmament was established despite the unsuccessful experience that the Commission had with the previous nuclear item, because nuclear disarmament continues, rightly, to be a priority objective in the nuclear field. In order to achieve progress on nuclear disarmament, it was argued and, we thought, generally agreed, in the Chairman's pre-session consultations, that the way in

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

which the Working Group should proceed would be to move quickly, after its general and structured debate, to a discussion of specific aspects related to the process of nuclear disarmament.

In fact, at one point there seemed to be a willingness to follow this constructive and logical approach. Australia drew up a list of points for further work, which we described as not being exhaustive, but which we felt were susceptible of multilateral consideration. A large number of delegations expressed interest in such a list and, as a consequence, in response to a request from the Chair, we circulated the list as a working paper. That list comprised: non-proliferation, which clearly covers a wide range of issues, including testing, vertical and horizontal proliferation; security guarantees, and here we identified both the positive and negative aspects; confidence-building measures to be considered in the context of nuclear disarmament; nuclear-weapon-free zones, which are, of course, the province of nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States alike; and nuclear weapons and international law, an area of interest identified in the study on nuclear weapons.

Australia was not wedded to that particular list, nor did we see it as exclusive. We were, however, wedded to the idea - originally accepted - that the Commission should focus on specific areas and pursue its objective of consensus recommendations. We were surprised therefore that when informal consultations were undertaken in order to seek such specific areas, a number of delegations refused to commit themselves even to the principle of focusing the work on specific items at the Commission's 1992 session, let alone to the substance of what those items might be. It is hard to see how the Commission can pursue its objectives in such circumstances. The intention of putting a nuclear item on the agenda was not, as we understand it, to have a three-year

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

general debate. We have a forum for that, which is the First Committee. This failure to agree left us in almost the same position at the end of the Commission's session as we were when we started the session this year, that is, with an agreed four-point work structure and no agreement on anything else.

In saying this I have not forgotten the very helpful Chairman's paper, which clearly will contribute to our future work. But Australia regrets that greater efforts could not have been made to seek practical progress on such an important question as nuclear disarmament.

I now turn to Working Group III, on the regional approach disarmament. The Working Group on regional disarmament had something of a head start, thanks to the efforts of the Chairman-elect to secure, in advance of the session, an agreed programme of work. Regrettably, the understandings reached prior to the Commission's session did not hold once the session got under way, but at least the Chairman did have a better sense of how such agreements might be achieved. This pre-session work, which to various extents was undertaken by other chairmen-elect, offers a useful and practical guide for future incoming chairmen, if only to ensure that we make the most of our limited time in future sessions of the Commission.

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

It is a matter of particular regret to my delegation that, after a most useful and illuminating general debate in Working Group III, where issues of sensitivity to all delegations were discussed in a most frank and thoughtful way, the Working Group was forced into a procedural discussion of how it should proceed to a more systematic discussion of the particular issues identified during the general debate. The high, or perhaps better expressed, the low point of these discussions was the effort made to remove references to the word "regional" from the Chairman's proposed structure of work.

In the event, agreement was finally reached, and the Working Group proceeded to an interesting exchange on the relationship between regional disarmament and global security and arms limitation and disarmament. That title in itself illustrates the complexity of the issues discussed.

This was followed by a discussion of "principles and guidelines". To the outsider this might seem a little confusing, but to the Working Group it was understood to be principles and guidelines on regional disarmament. Such was the result of our procedural discussions.

Our final discussions were fairly compressed, given the overwhelming wish of most delegations to undertake a detailed discussion of a list of issues for further attention, pulled together by the Chairman. But even when it was clear that this list would be solely a Chairman's list, and "without prejudice to the positions of delegations", some delegations still saw a need to try to compress or radically alter this list. Fortunately, the end result - which, I must stress, does not fully or accurately express the views of my delegation, nor should it necessarily do so, given that it is a Chairman's paper - now provides us with a useful agenda of issues for our work next

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

year. It is our hope that the Working Group next year will be able to get into the substance of these at the beginning, rather than the end, of its proceedings.

I turn now to Working Group IV: Science and technology. The Working Group on Science and Technology was a particularly interesting one because, as the Working Group's report states, it had a wide-ranging and challenging mandate encompassing matters that have never been dealt with in a systematic debate in the United Nations. In this context, the achievements of the Group can only be praised, and we consider the Working Group's report an extremely good, if necessarily limited, basis on which to proceed next year. The Working Group also has no fewer than seven working papers, all of which need greater examination in the forthcoming two sessions. Delegations should come prepared next year to do just this.

That said, we can only express puzzlement at the fact that in one crucial sphere where the Chairman's original text sought to lay out areas of fundamental agreement, areas which seemed axiomatic to any consideration related to science and technology, the Group could not reach agreement. The four propositions were as follows: first, that the aspects of the qualitative arms race should continue to be addressed in disarmament and arms-control agreements; secondly, that science and technology per se are deemed to be neutral; thirdly, that the application of science and technology for legitimate defensive purposes is acceptable; and fourthly, that their application for peaceful purposes should be promoted.

Self-evident, one might say; but not, it appeared, to the Working Group on Science and Technology. One delegation said that it could accept only the inclusion of points one and four as commonly held positions. This was despite

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

the fact that the Working Group appeared to agree that only the applications of science and technology determine their characteristics and that every country is entitled to its right of self-defence.

This refusal to include all four truths - on the Animal Farm-like justification that some truths are more equal than others - is an example of the kind of problem that the Disarmament Commission experienced this year. Indeed, when delegations fail to agree on principles which come direct from the Charter of the United Nations, even the least Machiavellian of us begin to question the motives of such delegations. Australia, for one, hopes that this Working Group will be allowed to turn itself to fruitful areas of work next year in a more substantive and constructive manner.

Year one of the newly functioning United Nations Disarmament Commission has been completed. Our results are before us in the document we have just adopted. They are useful and to some extent encouraging, but they could easily have been more so, as I have just indicated. While we, of course, acknowledge that diversity of views will always make agreements on recommendations on disarmament difficult - it is true that a more constructive implementation of the ideas contained in the reform package will also assist us greatly.

An impression that lingers with my delegation is that some are having difficulties in shrugging off "old think" and continue to work in a manner inconsistent with the great changes we have seen in the international climate, and out of keeping with the spirit that the reform package tries to engender in the Disarmament Commission - a bit like St. Augustine saying: "Lord, make me pure, but not yet".

Well, in Australia's view, the time has come to purify ourselves, and we hope that next year's session will demonstrate recognition of this fact.

Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The present session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission has one distinguishing characteristic. Under our new procedure of work, for the first time in all the years of its existence, we do not have to conclude consideration of any agenda item. Nevertheless, we can note with satisfaction that from the very beginning of our session, there was active work on all matters entrusted to the Commission. As a result, a large contribution has been made for the future, enabling us to hope for a successful conclusion of the work on these items at subsequent sessions.

This success, is not, of course, an isolated phenomenon. It must be viewed primarily in the context of the important political changes that are occurring in today's world. The new international situation and the stability of the negotiating process make more significant the political factors for ensuring the security of all States and help to make irreversible the evolving process of creating a new and peaceful period in the history of mankind. The work of this session of the Commission was carried out under the sign of these changes.

The results of the session clearly confirm the increasing importance of multilateral dialogue on ways and means to strengthen international security in all its aspects. The central role in ensuring that the unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral steps taken will fuse into a single whole undoubtedly belongs to the United Nations. Today's rebirth of the United Nations, which is expressed, above all, in the fruitful use of its peace-making functions, cannot by-pass the field of disarmament.

In practical terms, we must consider the question of improving the style and method of activity of the United Nations in working along this main line.

(Mr. Krasulin, USSR)

It is important to help strengthen in the United Nations the process of moving from opposition between the views of States in matters of disarmament - which, unfortunately, is something that we still encounter sometimes - to a fruitful search for agreed approaches and solutions based on a balance of interests.

If we were to draw up the balance sheet of the session ending today, we should note, above all, the dominant fact that the overwhelming majority of delegations sincerely strove to work out mutually acceptable approaches to the solution of the problems under consideration. This can be seen in the very high level of activity of many delegations, by their submission of many working papers and other concrete proposals. One can also see this in the full-fledged substantive dialogue aimed at working out constructive solutions which was evident at this session.

We are pleased with the work done by the Group on objective information on military matters. In our view, the document prepared by the Chairman of the Group reflects fairly fully the nature and content of the various proposals made by delegations and is a good basis for continuing and successfully concluding the work at the next session through the adoption of a substantial document which will reflect the significance of military openness as an effective factor for global security, disarmament and confidence-building and will assign an important role in this field to the United Nations.

(Mr. Krasulin, USSR)

At this session, for the first time, the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and related matters has become the subject of detailed discussion. The discussions which have taken place have enabled us to form a more complete and clear idea both of the possible areas of agreement and of the substance of the divergences between the positions of the parties.

Despite their disparate views, one can say that the participants in the Commission are agreed on the main issue: at this stage, it is important to channel scientific and technological progress in a constructive direction and put its achievements at the service of peace, disarmament and development. The many specific ideas and proposals on that subject which delegations put forward, both in their statements and in working papers, deserve, in our view, the most careful consideration. In a word, a rather good foundation has been laid for a more substantive and focused examination of this issue at the coming sessions of the Commission.

We are particularly satisfied with the active and businesslike work of the Working Group on regional-disarmament issues, which enabled us to bring to light a broad area of mutual understanding on the many points of principle in approaches to regional disarmament. We share the general opinion that the final objective of our work is to gain a comprehensive overview of the state of affairs in the field of regional disarmament and its interrelationship with global security and to define broad criteria and principles which could be applied by the countries concerned at their discretion.

The unofficial list of subjects prepared by the Chairman of the Group and the various opinions on them which were expressed are, in our view, a good

(Mr. Krasulin, USSR)

basis for the next and more crucial stage of the work of reaching agreement on the Commission's recommendations.

There was a thorough exchange of views in the Group on nuclear problems, an inherently difficult set of issues. We are satisfied with the positive response to the progress made thus far in the matter of bilateral nuclear disarmament. This progress, together with the favourable political trends in the world, can serve as a real stimulus for moving forward towards multilateral nuclear disarmament as well. We also looked with interest at the specific proposals made during the discussion, and we shall study them carefully. Of course, the Soviet delegation - and many others, I am sure - cannot but regret the fact that in nuclear matters the Commission is, as before, failing to reach the planes that would lead on to mutually acceptable solutions.

We are nevertheless inclined to think that the exchange of views is creating additional potential that helps the search for the most promising, high-priority areas for multilateral nuclear disarmament. However, this potential can be realized only if our future work is founded on the goal of seeking a common denominator in our positions that is based on constructive cooperation and not on the imposition of unilateral approaches. The course of the discussions in that group also showed that there is still much to be done in order to eliminate from the Commission's work the inertia of confrontation, the elements of double standards, and the occasional resounding, empty phrases not reinforced with any specific proposals.

The results of Commission's session inevitably lead us to the thought that if we are to achieve real results, it is particularly vital now for us to digest the experience we have acquired during the years of the Commission's activity and, having done so, to put together new and fresh approaches.

(Mr. Krasulin, USSR)

Obviously, we should be thinking of approaches which would be in keeping, on the one hand, with the significance and the possibilities of multilateralism in today's greatly changed world and, on the other, with the Commission's tasks as a deliberative body within the overall United Nations machinery for disarmament issues. For that reason, we should like to see continued consultations during the intersessional period and at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, so that the Commission, at its organizational session held in early December, can reach consensus on measures to make its work still more effective.

I wish to assure you, Sir, that the Soviet Union intends to go on making an active contribution to the work of the Commission and acting with vigour in all areas related to the strengthening of international security and, above all, in the key area of confining the military arsenals of all countries within the strict limits of reasonable sufficiency for defence.

In conclusion, Sir, I wish to thank you for the tireless efforts, the clear vision of the goals and the mastery of the art of diplomacy you have shown in the difficult post you hold. We are sure that they will help you in the coming months to make successful preparations for the December meeting of the Commission. We must of course also give the Chairmen of all the Working Groups their due; their leadership enabled us to put the activities of the Commission's subsidiary bodies on a businesslike footing.

We also thank the representatives of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, headed by Under-Secretary-General Akashi, for their valuable contribution to our work. And, as always, we could have done nothing without the constant assistance of the staff of the Department of Conference Services. For that, our heartfelt thanks go to them.

Mr. HOU Zhitong (China) (interpretation from Chinese): First of all, I would like to express my regret to the interpreters for failing to prepare my statement in advance.

As the 1991 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission reaches a successful conclusion, the Chinese delegation would like to thank you for your effective leadership and your important contributions. We would also like to thank the Chairmen of the four Working Groups: Ambassador Erdös of Hungary, Ambassador Moussa of Egypt, Ambassador Wisnumurti of Indonesia and Ambassador Castro of Brazil. We would like to express our appreciation to them for their hard work and tremendous efforts.

We would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Akashi for his energetic support, and also the officers of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the interpreters and translators for their effective cooperation.

This session on disarmament is an important one, held against a background of important changes in the international situation; it has received universal attention from the international community. In the past three weeks, delegations, in a serious and businesslike atmosphere, have conducted broad and in-depth discussions of the four important items on the agenda and have achieved some preliminary yet positive results.

Equally important is the fact, demonstrated by the discussions, that the representatives participating in this session have shown the desire to reach consensus and a spirit of constructive cooperation. Among the different groups and countries, no serious confrontation arose during the deliberations, and a spirit of compromise and negotiation prevailed. The Commission report adopted by consensus today and the documents of the Working Groups have proved

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

this point. We believe that all these factors will exert a positive and beneficial influence on the discussions to be held next year.

The tasks facing us are still difficult. We have reason to believe, optimistically, that so long as delegations make further efforts and continue to step up their constructive cooperation, our deliberations will achieve substantive results.

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

This is our first session since the adoption of the reforms. We believe that it has shown that the reform measures are necessary and in general effective. Of course, further efforts must be made in this regard. We are pleased to see that all countries are placing more emphasis on the important role to be played by the Disarmament Commission as the only multilateral forum with wide representation.

China has always attached importance to and actively participated in the work of the Disarmament Commission. This year we submitted three working documents and participated in the discussion in a constructive spirit. We have seriously studied the documents and recommendations submitted by all sides. It should be pointed out that the non-aligned and third world countries have played an important role, and one that is not to be neglected, in promoting the establishment of reforms in the Disarmament Commission and in carrying out its mandate.

In the new circumstances, the international community has placed high hopes in the Disarmament Commission. We hope that the newly reformed Commission will play a greater role in furthering disarmament, safeguarding peace, and establishing a new international political order that is fair and equitable. In making further contributions, the Chinese delegations will as always spare no effort in joining all members in a constructive spirit to fulfil this objective.

Mr. JAIN (India): Our understanding, like that of the delegation of Canada before us, was that we would be meeting in the afternoon, and that we would be speaking at that meeting. We would, however, be prepared to make a statement after all the other statements have been made, because we are still waiting for the head of our delegation, who is expected very shortly. Thus,

(Mr. Jain, India)

if I might request your indulgence, Sir, in calling upon us at the end of the debate, I would be grateful.

The CHAIRMAN: Is Ambassador Mason of Canada in a position to speak at this stage? If not, there are still two delegations that would like to make concluding statements but are not prepared at this stage to do so.

Ms. GONZALEZ Y REYNEAU (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation would like to make a few observations. We, too, intended to make a more organized statement this afternoon, but unfortunately I may not be able to attend at that time because of other commitments. I should like therefore to make a brief statement and I would ask the interpreters to excuse my lack of a written text.

First, my delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on the very efficient way in which you have guided our work. Your diplomatic skill has certainly helped us to conclude this stage of our work successfully. I should like also to thank the Chairmen of the Working Groups, who have worked especially well.

I believe that this year, in the Disarmament Commission, we are beginning an experiment and making an effort to reactivate our discussions. However, my delegation believes that we must not go off course. We are concerned that in the priority and central areas, such as questions related to nuclear disarmament, we are not making the desired progress, whereas secondary measures are meeting with success. Our major responsibility should be to contribute to the overall process of disarmament and as a matter of priority and urgency, to nuclear disarmament, and not to secondary matters that are not directed towards general and complete disarmament.

We note with concern that in the priority areas it was not possible to make any progress at this session. We have not made any substantive progress

(Ms. Gonzalez y Reyneau, Mexico)

because of a lack of political will on the part of a number of delegations that have consistently refused to become involved in measures that would lead to general and complete disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. Moreover, we regret that some delegations have merely exploited this session to go back on the priorities established in 1978, even abandoning some aspects of particular importance to the work we are carrying out.

We would therefore appeal to members to evince political will when we begin our work in 1992 in such a way as to enable us to make progress in the areas that we consider to be core, as well as in other areas which, in the opinion of my delegation, are equally important but nevertheless complementary.

The CHAIRMAN: There remain two speakers who wish to make concluding statements. The representative of India and, if I have understood, the representative of Canada have noted that they would prefer to make statements in the afternoon. I would like to adjourn the meeting at this stage and reconvene at 3 p.m. sharp. In order to save time, I strongly urge members to be here and to listen to the remaining speakers.

Ms. MASON (Canada): I note the time, but I am in a position to proceed now if that will facilitate our work.

The CHAIRMAN: Would it be the wish of the Commission that we continue? As I understand it, we will have conference facilities until 1.30 p.m. We could certainly finish if the remaining speakers agree to that. I take it, then, that we can continue and finish the meeting.

Ms. MASON (Canada): As head of delegation from Canada to this first session of the Disarmament Commission under the reformed procedure, and against the backdrop of unprecedented and extraordinary cooperation by our colleagues in other United Nations forums, I came to this session in a

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

cautiously optimistic mood. The issues before us were timely and in urgent need of our focused attention.

As the discussion proceeded in three of the four Working Groups, I became less cautious and more optimistic. A real dialogue began to take place, with a multiplicity of views enriching the assessments of individual delegations on the various issues before us. I regret to say that the new spirit was not so much in evidence in Working Group II, despite the guidance of a distinguished and dedicated Chairman. Rather, the deliberations there have again shown the divergence of views characteristic of past meetings of the Disarmament Commission.

This year's deliberations, as others have noted, were essentially limited to a general debate of the entire spectrum of issues related to nuclear disarmament. Efforts were made by some delegations to focus on areas where it was thought that consensus might be possible, but in the end this did not prove acceptable to all delegations.

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

In Canada's view, if this Working Group is to make progress next year on the vital issues of nuclear disarmament a more constructive approach must be adopted.

However, in the other three Working Groups, while delegations understandably did not abandon longstanding positions on which there continue to be serious differences of view, constructive discussion and debate ensued, revealing a far greater degree of common ground than I had imagined existed. In the view of my delegation, a firm foundation for further work, without prejudice to areas of disagreement, clearly began to emerge.

I do not intend to delineate those broad areas of agreement, as other delegations, like that of my Australian colleague who has spoken here today, have already done that in a most eloquent and comprehensive fashion. What I wish to focus on is the issue of the substance - or, more accurately, the lack of substance - in the reports of the other three Working Groups, because when it came to translating the real progress that was in fact made during these Working Group discussions into reports which would consolidate this progress and serve as the basis for our work next year my earlier optimism proved to be naïve indeed.

In other words, when it came to beginning the process of fulfilling the Commission's mandate, as reflected in the General Assembly resolution

> "to make every effort to achieve specific recommendations on the items on its agenda" (resolution 45/62 B, para. 9)

delegations took an entirely different position from that characterizing the very constructive elaboration of issues that had taken place, and began to ask, since we had three years to consider three of the four items and one more

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

year for the fourth item, why we should attempt to agree to anything substantive this year. The implication seemed to be that because it was premature - and I agree it was premature - to seek to identify recommendations for action this year, it was also premature - and with this I do not agree - to seek to do anything substantive, as if the recommendations are growing on a tree somewhere and need only to be plucked when the time comes, with no thought for fertilizing the ground or taking any other concrete action to ensure that there will be a worthwhile product at the end of our three-year labours. Over and over, some delegations asked why we should try to go beyond a mere cataloguing of views. Why, indeed?

In the past, when every aspect of the United Nations was frozen in the prism of the cold-war confrontation, to have a constructive discussion of issues was a worthwhile goal in and of itself. I am not suggesting for a moment that mere discussion is not a worthwhile activity. But, now that action is possible, discussion, however constructive, is in my view simply not enough - not when the problems we face are so daunting and so urgent, and not when our colleagues in the Security Council, in the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations and in the specialized agencies dealing with humanitarian needs have already moved well beyond talking and are acting together in the most sensitive, delicate and difficult of areas.

In my culture one of the quintessential symbols of the utter abdication of responsibility is that of the leader Nero, who played the fiddle while his city, Rome, burned to the ground. During the crucial period when action could have been taken to stop the fire before it became too large to stop, he did not act to stop it. He amused himself with pleasant diversions.

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

While the flames of militarism continue unabated in many regions of the world, I ask, "What did we, the distinguished representatives at the 1991 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, do?" Well, we pointed out in great detail the height of the flames; we exchanged a diversity of views on the heat generated by those flames; we identified in admirable detail the destruction being wreaked in various parts of the world by those flames; but when it came to agreeing on the most basic steps to combat those flames the argument was advanced that there was no need to rush. It is said that we have two more years to agree on what type of fire-fighting equipment to purchase, who should pay for it, and, above all, who should take the lead in actually beginning to fight the flames. Why all the rush? Why, indeed?

One of the most important discussions, in my view and the view of my delegation, that have taken place during this session of the Commission is that concerning transparency and openness. Although this was the primary focus of Working Group I, in our view it was an essential theme underlying all of the discussions in Working Groups III and IV as well. The principle of transparency and openness in the end is truly revolutionary, for at its foundation is the principle of accountability. Only when nations are truly accountable to the international community for actions of theirs that impact on international security will the United Nations function as its creators envisaged.

There can be no collective accountability among countries without national accountability. That is why my delegation submitted in Working Group I the first annual report on Canadian military exports, and why in Working Group III, I outlined a history of that report and how in order for my Government to respond to the public demand for better information on military

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

exports we had to revise completely our methodology in relation to keeping track, in a comprehensive, statistical way, of such exports. Now that the Canadian public has better and more complete information on Canadian military exports, one can be sure that the Canadian Government will be even more accountable for its policies in that regard.

Just as there can be no collective responsibility among States without national responsibility, so there can be no national responsibility without the accountability of individuals who participate in the Governments, whether at the bureaucratic or the political level, of each of those Member States, for no system can be ethical without ethical individuals. I raise this matter because when it came time to agree on a report in each of the Working Groups which might form the basis for future work without prejudice to existing differences we were informed by some delegations that they lacked instructions to agree on anything substantive. Although it may sometimes seem that our instructions come from an alien planet, in fact they do not. Instructions come from individuals who are part of the same system as the individuals who are seeking the instructions.

In my statement in Working Group III on arms transfers, under precise instructions from my Government I referred to the moral responsibility of Governments to ensure that exports of their military equipment do not contribute to regional instabilities. I refer now under precise instructions from my Government to the moral responsibility of each and every representative at the 1991 session of the Commission to ensure that we stop talking about fire-fighting and start taking concrete action to stop the fire.

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

Over the past three weeks we have heard a great deal of discussion about the diversion of resources for military applications to desperately needed social and economic activities. My own delegation, somewhat tardily and with the aid of an extremely able Chairman, submitted a working paper in Working Group IV on the conversion of military resources to civilian uses. I should like to suggest that perhaps we need to discuss the utilization of resources that has been taking place during this session.

(Ms. Mason, Canada)

Each of our Governments has expended moneys for us to participate in this session. How else could this money have been spent? How else, indeed!

At the end of the 1989 session of the First Committee, Canada very reluctantly decided that it would no longer participate in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. We have not left completely, as some chose to do, but we are "not participating". I believe that this was the first time Canada ever took such an action in a multilateral forum dealing with disarmament. The Canadian representative on that Ad Hoc Committee was dividing his time between discussions there - which had not advanced in some years beyond an effort to assign blame to one group or another for every ill in the zone - and discussions in the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations on how to make the United Nations response in this area more comprehensive, more timely - in short, more effective.

As the gap between the sterile rhetoric of the Indian Ocean zone of peace Ad Hoc Committee, on the one hand, and the ever-increasing action-oriented work of the Special Committee on Peace-Keeping Operations grew, it became clear where Canada wished to focus its attention, given the resource and personnel constraints that we are facing in my country. Increasingly, those resource constraints are forcing us to make difficult choices. But is the choice so difficult when it is a choice between form and substance?

I believe that the United Nations Disarmament Commission is at an historic crossroads. One path points backwards and leads to irrelevancy. It is the way of Nero. The other points forward. It is not an easy road, and it is one that cannot be travelled alone, because the challenges that face this newly multipolar world are beyond the capacity of any one country, or even group of countries, to solve. This new path of shared responsibility beckons to us all. Let us go down it together.

Mr. JAIN (India): We are about to conclude our work at this session of the Disarmament Commission, and my delegation would like to take this opportunity to convey its sincere appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, for so ably steering our deliberations during the past three weeks.

Our work was structured this year under an improved format, and we had a detailed exchange of views that should, no doubt, help us understand one another's concern on the issues before us. My delegation is fully aware of the complexities of our task, but the need for us to get down to our priorities and goals is even more pressing.

Our deliberations at this session have shown once again that, while concepts and perceptions of security differ, a common objective of States remains the strengthening of national security and the maintenance of international peace. The priorities and disarmament strategies agreed upon at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, along with the multilateral machinery it established, continue to provide a sound basis for resolving the outstanding disarmament issues of our times. As long as those priorities are kept in mind the differences in political institutions and socio-economic systems of States and their historical backgrounds should not constitute insurmountable obstacles to international cooperation in the pursuit of peace and security, which should rest on a commitment to joint survival.

My delegation is happy to note that Working Group I has made further progress this year on the subject of objective information on military matters. In our view, while progress towards general and complete disarmament would continue to rest on the exercise of the political will of States, a better flow of information on military matters could serve as a confidence-building measure and a tool for disarmament agreements. We believe

(Mr. Jain, India)

that objective information on military matters will have its usefulness if it is so viewed and oriented as a catalyst for the promotion of specific disarmament agreements and other concrete disarmament measures in accordance with the agreed priorities embodied in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The so-called transparency through information-flow and the consequent confidence-building that it is supposed to promote are, in most cases, severely limited by the overriding security considerations, as perceived by each State for itself. Moreover, these are not, in any event, an end in themselves. The Chairman's paper annexed to the report of Working Group I embodies some of these primary considerations. As such, we look forward to a successful conclusion of the Disarmament Commission's deliberations on this subject at its next session.

We attach great importance to the issue of nuclear disarmament, which remains the primary task in the disarmament process. The discussions in Working Group II clearly showed that the priority objectives set out in the Final Document have remained largely unfulfilled. Perhaps it is not quite appropriate to use the phrase "process of nuclear disarmament", since so far we have only seen isolated moves in the field of nuclear-arms control.

We had an interesting exchange of views in Working Group II on how we should focus our work at the future sessions of the Disarmament Commission. A suggestion was made that we concentrate on non-proliferation and certain other partial measures, the areas of perceived quick fixes. These indirect measures, important as they are, cannot, however, lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons. If we are serious, we have to pursue the goal of nuclear disarmament in a broad and global context.

(Mr. Jain, India)

The question of how we should strengthen the process of nuclear disarmament needs to be examined in the light of the dismal failure to achieve our central objectives. The primary task is to halt and reverse the nuclear-arms race. We cannot afford to lose sight of it, however intractable the task might seem to be. The steps that are required are listed in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. They include cessation of qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, cessation of production of nuclear weapons and a comprehensive and phased programme for the reduction of nuclear-weapons stockpiles leading to their complete elimination.

Although it is our understanding that those objectives are covered under the second item in the Chairman's paper, "Ways and means of achieving the priorities set out by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament", given the importance of those objectives they should be duly and specifically reflected in our final conclusions. It was in pursuit of those objectives that we had proposed at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament an action plan for a world free of nuclear weapons.

We have had a thorough discussion in Working Group III on the regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security. As my delegation made clear in the Working Group, we believe that the focus of United Nations efforts on disarmament has to be primarily multilateral and weapons-specific. We also recognize that the regional approach to disarmament has proved to be effective in some regions and can make a useful contribution to global security. At the same time, it must be appreciated that such an approach may not necessarily work in other regions, and there are many

(Mr. Jain, India)

countries, including my own, that have an open mind on the subject. In our view, a premature effort on the part of a body like this Commission to prescribe a set of principles and measures could hamper, rather than help, the process.

(Mr. Jain, India)

We should also take care to avoid creating an impression that the regional approach is a substitute for global efforts. The latter must continue to be pursued and indeed intensified further if the agreed goals and priorities of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament are to be realized.

The deliberations in Working Group IV have shown once again that the means for a world order based on collective security are significantly facilitated by the scientific and technological revolutions of the present century. As agreed upon at the first special session, quantitative disarmament measures are important, but it must be ensured that the limited gains are not quickly eroded by the development of new weapons systems and through a technological escalation of the arms race. In order that the qualitative aspect of the arms race may be properly addressed, increased transparency in research and development in frontier technologies with potential military applications and the cessation of military applications of such research are urgently required.

The question of the qualitative arms race, which is a matter of universal concern, was addressed under the first sub-item in Working Group IV. The working paper presented by my delegation highlighted some of the areas in which new and emerging technologies with far-reaching military applications are taking shape, as well as the implications of these developments on the global security environment. It is our hope that delegations would study the specific positions for action made therein so that we will be able to show a common determination to give science and technology a human face and to ensure that it is used for the progress of mankind and not for its destruction. We are happy to note that the perception of the need for a common compact to use

(Mr. Jain, India)

scientific and technological developments for peaceful ends has been confirmed during the deliberations at this session. We are also glad to note that Working Group IV was able to adopt a substantive consensus report. We hope that this trend will continue in future sessions and that we will be able to achieve concrete results on different important issues focused under this agenda item.

Mr. ADANK (New Zealand): Let me first extend my delegation's thanks to you and to the other members of the Bureau for guiding the work of this year's Commission. Clearly, valuable work has been carried out by the Commission at this year's session. It is, however, our hope that in future we will be able to achieve greater progress in addressing some of the difficulties which seem to prevent us from arriving at concrete results. In this regard, I think the statement made by Australia earlier this morning has highlighted a number of concerns which my delegation fully shares. Most important, we need to acknowledge that the reform package contained in the ways and means annex to resolution 44/119 C cannot of itself enhance the functioning of our Commission. It needs to be met with a change of approach by delegations. We need to have more results-oriented deliberations.

An example of the problems we need to address is provided when we consider the course of our deliberations this year on the item on nuclear disarmament. My delegation is indebted to Mr. Moussa of Egypt for encouraging and at times making compulsory a broad-ranging exchange of views on this important item. It was our hope that this discussion would set the scene for the identification and establishment of a practical, focused work programme, which might guide us for the remaining two years of our consideration of the item. It was disappointing, therefore, that informal consultations convened

(Mr. Adank, New Zealand)

with this objective in mind did not arrive at any recommendations as to where this Working Group would go in the future. Clearly, this is an issue which remains to be addressed at an early stage.

We in the Disarmament Commission have already faced and met two important challenges, first, by adopting the ways and means annex in 1989 and, secondly, by agreeing on the four-item agenda which we took up this year. But we now need to complement this structural reform by meeting the third challenge, which is to adopt a more practical, results-oriented approach to our consideration of agenda items. This third challenge should, I think, be a cause for reflection for all of us in the coming months in preparation for next year's session.

The CHAIRMAN: Let me conclude with a few remarks regarding the current and future work of the Disarmament Commission. The year 1991 was the first year in which the Commission was working under its new organizational framework. This allowed for concentrating on four distinct and future-oriented items and for achieving progress in all four areas. With respect to the comprehensive input of all delegations, expressed in the large number of working papers submitted to the Commission, as well as in a lively and detailed discussion, I think I am able to express the common satisfaction of all participants. However, I am sensitive to the scepticism voiced in the concluding remarks of several delegations. I share the view that we all have to have a fresh look to the 1992 session, but I am absolutely convinced that you will go along with a new chairman, who will, it is hoped, have a very successful session in 1992.

As three items on our agenda are new items, it was not possible in the end to achieve as much progress as had been hoped for. This, however, should

(The Chairman)

in no way diminish the importance of the comprehensive discussion that has taken place and which can be expected to continue over the next two years. The future-oriented approach, in particular, of these three items should allow for even more input in the forthcoming sessions. With regard to the only old item, a detailed discussion made it possible to identify major areas of common understanding, which should be dealt with in more detail during next year's session. This should allow for finalizing the work on this item by adopting relevant principles and guidelines.

The success achieved during this year's session was possible only because of the excellent leadership displayed by the four Chairmen of the Working Groups, to whom I would like to express our deep-felt appreciation. Likewise, let me thank Under-Secretary-General Akashi and the members of the Secretariat for the overall and indispensable support given to our work. Moreover, let me also express our gratitude to the interpreters, as well as to all other United Nations staff contributing to the success of our work. Last but not least, let me thank all delegations for their comprehensive cooperation, as well as the constructive manner in which they contributed to the work of the Commission.

In conclusion, let me simply state that the process of re-organization which we started this year will have to be further elaborated upon in order to allow for the continuing success of our work in years to come. Let me once more thank you all for the support displayed, and express my pleasure in having chaired this year's session of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. MORRIS (Australia): A number of delegations have asked me for a copy of the statement that I made. As it is not yet available, I will ensure that copies are left at the table. Similarly, I would hope that a few of the other inspiring statements made this morning might also be left on the table so that we can get copies of those as well.

The CHAIRMAN: I would underline that all statements were inspiring for our debate.

As there is no further business, I declare the 1991 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission closed.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.